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Address of the Friends' Yearly Meeting Held
in Philadelphia. 1868

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AN ADDRESS
OF
THE YEARLY MEETING
OF
FRIENDS,

HELD IN PHILADELPHIA.

TO ITS OWN MEMBERS, AND TO THE MEMBERS OF OTHER
YEARLY MEETINGS.

PUBLISHED BY DIRECTION OF THE
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DEC 19 1939

*At a Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia, by adjournments
from the 20th of the 4th month to the 24th of the same,
inclusive, 1868.*

The Meeting for Sufferings, under a renewed religious concern for the welfare of the members of our Society, having prepared an Address to them, in which some of our long-established Christian doctrines and testimonies are reviewed, and counsel given on subjects connected with a consistent support of them, it was now read, and being deliberately considered, was fully united with and adopted, and the Clerk is directed to sign it on behalf of the Meeting.

JOSEPH SCATTERGOOD,

Clerk to the Meeting this Year.

ADDRESS.

IN considering the present condition of our beloved religious Society and the many changes taking place within it, we have been introduced into deep concern and solicitude, under the conviction that, in many respects, it is falling short of that spiritual standing and full exemplification of the doctrines and requirements of the gospel, which the blessed Head of the Church calls for at its hands, and for which it was once conspicuous.

Our hearts are saddened with the belief, that through unwillingness on the part of many of the members, to submit to the restraints and mortifications of the cross of Christ, and from the leavening influence of the love and spirit of the world, that clearness of vision which in time past was vouchsafed to us as a people, whereby the emptiness of an outside religion was plainly seen, has become dimmed, so that many are resting in a profession of truths, which, though sound and good in themselves, are not practically experienced by them. Many things have also crept in and found place in the Society, out of which our forefathers were led by the unerring and unchangeable Spirit of Truth, and against which, by the same Spirit, they were constrained to bear testimony.

This belief, and a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency, have led to searching of heart, and affectionate desires have been raised that not only among the members of this Yearly Meeting, but also among those composing our beloved society wherever scattered, there may be a true sight and sense of our shortcomings begotten, and a willingness manifested honestly and impartially to examine the principles and measures which are obtaining sanction among us, and the end to which they are tending. That so, under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit—which will not be withheld if humbly and sincerely sought—we, as a united company of believers, may be enabled to promote and commend the doctrines and practices that have ever characterized Friends, and thus be brought to occupy that position in the militant Church, which He who first gathered the Society designed for us.

Under a lively feeling of Christian love we would tenderly exhort the members of this Yearly Meeting, in the language of the Apostle, “to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;” beseeching them to remember there are but two paths pointed out by the Saviour of men as set before us, with the power of choice which to pursue. “Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” To go in at the strait gate and continue in the narrow way, there must be a renunciation of self, and a childlike dependence on the guidance and support of the Holy Spirit manifested in the heart; because the propensities of the natural man, his pride and unsanctified intellectual wisdom, combined with the temptations of his unwearied enemy, strongly urge and entice him to

choose the broad and easier path. Every one who is willing to walk in the highway of the Lord, must turn his back on the world, take up his daily cross, and not shrink from being accounted a fool for Christ's sake. But these have the soul-sustaining presence of their Saviour, who purchased them with His most precious blood, that He might redeem them from all evil, and who is a present help to them in every needful time. Being thus brought among the flock of his companions, they can testify from blessed experience and in humble gratitude, that the faith derived from Him overcomes the world and gives a foretaste of the rest and peace of the redeemed in heaven.

It is not to our own members only that, on the present occasion, we would, in the flowings of gospel love, extend the exhortation to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," and to seek for ability to tread in the way of holiness and self-denial. Our interest in the best welfare of our beloved brethren of the same household of faith in other parts of the Society has not lessened, and we are concerned for the establishment of all professing to be Friends, in the faith of the gospel as it was promulgated by our worthy predecessors; and for the restoration of that unity and harmony which become the followers of Christ.

Dear Friends, wherever situated, we make a high profession of the glorious gospel that has brought life and immortality to light. We believe that in this last dispensation the prediction of the Prophet is fulfilled, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The doctrine that Christ is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, is clearly set forth in the New Testament. Friends have ever believed in it, and we have ample evidence in the blameless lives, the religious growth, the experience and establishment in righteousness; as well as in the triumphant deaths of thousands who have practically adhered to it, that it is no cunningly devised fable, but the truth as it is in Jesus.

The great Head of the Church, in bringing our forefathers out from other religious professors, giving them to see that the rites and ceremonies so generally observed by them were without authority from Him, and dangerous in proportion as they are relied on, and causing them to understand the means by which alone any can become members of the mystical body of Christ, we believe designed that Friends should be faithful witnesses for Him; speaking, acting, and worshipping as true believers in the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. They were called to be as lights in the world, as a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid; bearing testimony, not only against all evil between man and man, against spiritual wickedness in high places; but also against all will-worship, and the intrusion of man's unregenerated will and wisdom into the work of salvation or the service of God; and to call others away from lifeless observances which mar the religion of the professing church, to that acceptable worship which is in spirit and in truth.

Very many are the blessings, both spiritual and temporal, bestowed on us as a people, and our responsibility is commensurate with those blessings. The queries should therefore come home to each one of us, with solemn weight: Am I living in conformity with the self-denying religion I profess? Am I maintaining, in life and con-

versation, the doctrines and testimonies of the gospel, in that purity and spirituality in which it pleased the Lord to open them to the understanding of the founders of the Society of which I am a member? so that I contribute to its mission being carried on, and to the maintenance of its right position in the militant Church.

In this day of unsettlement and contention in what is called the religious world, the attention of different classes among both the learned and the unlearned, is turned to questions involving the fundamental principles of Christianity, as well as to the diversified modes in which it is professed by the various religious denominations.

The human intellect, trained in the schools, and unsubjected to the regenerating power of Christ, is very busy in its investigations of the evidences of the truth of the gospel dispensation. Some are striving to undermine all belief in the foundation of Christian faith—Christ crucified and risen from the dead; while others, within almost all professing churches, seeking the living among the dead, are laboring to bring the people back, some more, some less, to services and rituals, from which, it was reasonably hoped, the whole body of Protestant professors would have been entirely freed ere now. Thus the adversary of God and man is working, with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, to entrap the souls of the unwary and unstable, and by blinding the eye to the true nature and spirit of the Gospel, to prevent the spread of the kingdom of the dear Son of God in the earth.

Amid this general commotion and strong disposition to overlook the Spirit and be made perfect by the flesh, it behooves us all to watch unto prayer, lest instead of building on the Rock of ages and foundation of many

generations, we be found removed therefrom, and substituting a religion of mere opinion or sentiment, which makes the cross of Christ of little or no effect, and admits of conformity with the manners and maxims of the world.

In the discharge of a duty laid upon us, as we believe, by the Head of the Church, we are engaged, in tender love to our fellow-members, to revive some of the doctrines and testimonies which Friends have ever held and do most surely believe; also to extend counsel and warning in relation to departures from a faithful support of some of those doctrines and testimonies, into which, as we apprehend, the enemy of all righteousness is striving to draw many under our name, and to beguile them into the use of outward forms or unauthorized services, out of which, by obedience to the Light of Christ, our worthy predecessors were brought.

Our religious Society has ever accepted the Holy Scriptures as containing a declaration of the doctrines and principles relating to salvation and eternal life. But where the intellectual powers of unregenerate men are relied on in the interpretation of these sacred writings, however much those powers may have been cultivated or adorned by learning, many and important mistakes, as to their true meaning and the doctrines they inculcate, are made. Hence it is that, while all professing Christians acknowledge the Scriptures as the only outward criterion of religious belief, they differ so greatly as to what they teach and enjoin.

Friends call no man master, neither do they adopt any declaration of faith, merely because it has been believed or advocated by those who have gone before them. Our Saviour, in answer to the question, "How knoweth this

man letters, having never learned?" said, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." We believe that those faithful men and women who were instrumental in the Lord's hand in gathering and establishing our religious Society, having been made living witnesses of the power and coming of the Son of God in their hearts, and received the gift of true faith in Him, by which they were enabled to do his will, were given to know and to become true believers in *all* the doctrines of the gospel, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures. The experience and testimony of those who have succeeded them in the Society, who have "walked by the same rule and minded the same thing," have been similar to those of the primitive Friends, who lived and died in the faith. The Society has, therefore, upon right ground, ever declared its adhesion to Scripture doctrine, as set forth by George Fox, Robert Barclay, George Whitehead, William Penn, and other of the early Friends.

In the year 1693 a declaration of Christian doctrine was put forth in London on behalf of the Society of Friends, from which we take the following:—

"We sincerely profess faith in God by his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, as being our Light and Life, our only way to the Father, and also our only Mediator and Advocate with the Father. That God created all things: He made the worlds by his Son Jesus Christ; He being that powerful and living Word of God by whom all things were made, and that the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit are one; in divine being inseparable, one true, living and eternal God, blessed forever. Yet that this Word or Son of God, in the fulness of time took flesh, became perfect man; according to the flesh, descended and came of the seed of Abraham and David, but was miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost, and

born of the Virgin Mary; and also further declared powerfully to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification by the resurrection from the dead. That in the Word—or Son of God—was life, and the same life was the light of men, and that He was that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world; and therefore men are to believe in the light that they may become children of the Light. That, as man, Christ died for our sins, rose again and was received up into glory in the heavens; He having, in his dying for all, been that one, great, universal offering and sacrifice for peace, atonement, and reconciliation between God and man: and He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world: we were reconciled by his death, but saved by his life."

"That divine honor and worship are due to the Son of God, and that He is in faith to be prayed unto, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ called upon, as the primitive Christians did, because of the glorious union, or oneness of the Father and the Son; and that we cannot acceptably offer up prayer and praises to God, or receive a gracious answer or blessing from God but in and through his dear Son Christ."

We are the more concerned to set forth the unequivocal belief of Friends, in the deity, the atonement, and the mediatorship of our Lord Jesus Christ on the present occasion, because that many who separated from our religious Society some years since, but who assume the name of Friends, set up the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in the heart of man, as being alone his Saviour; independent of the man Christ Jesus who died on Calvary, and deny that the sacrifice He then made of himself, when He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," was the atonement for sin, by which we are reconciled to God. Robert Barclay in his Apology says:

“God manifested his love towards us in the sending of his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, who gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, that He might reconcile us unto himself, and by the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God and suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.” “Forasmuch as all men who have come to man’s estate—the man Jesus only excepted—have sinned, therefore all have need of this Saviour to remove the wrath of God from them due to their offences. In this respect He is truly said to have borne the iniquities of us all in his body on the tree; and therefore is the only Mediator, having qualified the wrath of God toward us, so that our former sins stand not in our way, being, by virtue of his most satisfactory sacrifice, removed and pardoned. Neither do we think that remission of sins is to be expected, sought or obtained any other way, or by any works or sacrifice whatsoever; though, as has been said formerly, *they* may come to partake of this remission that are ignorant of the history.”

These declarations, which are in accordance with the testimony of the approved writings of Friends both ancient and modern, were published to the world in the early days of our religious Society, as setting forth its faith *then* on these momentous points. They have been officially confirmed and sanctioned by, perhaps, every generation of our members since, and they declare the faith of Friends *now*.

Impressed with the awful consequences that may attend doubt or disbelief of these fundamental truths of Christianity in any who possess the Holy Scriptures which set them forth, and who make profession of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it is our heart’s desire

and prayer, that those who were formerly members in our religious Society, but who stumbled at these doctrines and went out from us, laying aside all traditional bias and reasoning of the carnal mind, would heartily embrace them, and stand before the world practical believers in, and open advocates of, the Deity, Atonement, and Mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord. It would truly be a cause of rejoicing to Friends everywhere, were all who take their name, one in faith on these and on all other doctrines of the gospel.

While treating on this subject, we are concerned to caution all our members against opinions, boldly advanced and plausibly advocated, that as God has made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, and because He has accepted the sacrifice of his dear Son for the remission of sins, therefore sinners may of themselves at any time come to Christ, and by a mere intellectual belief in Him and his atoning sacrifice, whether obtained from the testimony of Scripture, or by other outward means, know their sins to be imputed to Him and forgiven, and his righteousness to be imputed to them, although they may have never known true repentance or the work of regeneration and sanctification.

Dear Friends, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." "God hath exalted his Son Jesus with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." But man cannot come unto him in his own will or time. He declared, "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." This effectual coming to Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit in the

heart. To the repenting, returning sinner, who feels that he has nothing in himself on which to rest his hopes of forgiveness and acceptance with his offended Creator, the mediation, intercession, and propitiation of the crucified Redeemer is inexpressibly precious. It is through Him alone that a door of hope is opened, and all who yield their hearts to the convicting, converting power of the gift of grace, by which alone they can be brought to see their sinfulness, and experience that repentance which is not to be repented of, will, in the Lord's time, through living faith in Him, know the blood of Christ to cleanse them from all sin.

Although the posterity of Adam, being born in his image after the fall, are degenerate and devoid of the divine life in which he originally stood, and subject to the seed and power of the Serpent, yet Friends do not believe that any are partakers of Adam's guilt, or punishable for sin, until they make it their own by transgression. They hold, that man has no natural light or moral faculty pertaining to his constitution, and left undepraved by the fall, which can give him a sense of his lost and polluted condition, or bring him one step out of it and into spiritual fellowship and communion with God. But "The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men," and it is by this, and this alone, that man can be brought out of spiritual darkness, or do any really good thing. It is this that warns, convicts, teaches, and gives the power to embrace the means provided to bring him out of his fallen state, to know and obey God. But though this divine gift is in him, it is not of him. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; but this divine grace, or measure of the Holy Spirit, was purchased for man by the meritorious death of Christ, and is not less universal than the seed of sin; enlightening all in a day of its visitation, and

bringing salvation if received and obeyed. Thus as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Seeing, says Barclay, "no man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son revealeth him," and seeing "the revelation of the Son is in and by the Spirit, therefore the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be revealed." "Jesus Christ, in and by whom the Father is revealed, doth also reveal himself to his disciples and friends, in and by his Spirit." He standeth at the door and knocks, and whoso heareth his voice and openeth to him, He comes into the hearts of such. Paul declared that "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It follows from this truth, that no man can savingly know Jesus to be the Lord, but by the revelation of the Spirit within him; and there can be no certain knowledge of Him in his several offices but by the same means.

But while insisting on the necessity of a revelation to the soul of that knowledge of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, which is life eternal, Friends by no means undervalue or lightly esteem the Holy Scriptures, or any other outward means bestowed on man for his instruction and help in righteousness. These they consider as most profitable and helpful. But they believe that where this certain knowledge of God is obtained through inward revelation by the Holy Spirit, it is sufficient for salvation, though the individual, in the providence of the Almighty, may have been cut off from all outward helps to that knowledge; and contrariwise, that however correct the knowledge acquired through outward means, and the exercise of the intellectual powers of man, may be, if this inward revelation is wanting, there is nothing known that can effect salvation.

We are earnestly concerned that this scriptural doctrine of the indispensable agency of the Spirit or Grace of God, manifested in the heart, in obtaining a saving knowledge of the gospel of Christ, and its absolute need in every stage of the work of salvation and in every service of God, which was strenuously insisted on by our early Friends, and has ever characterized the faith of our religious Society, may not be departed from or lightly esteemed by any who profess with us. For it is in this day as formerly, Satan strives "To puff man up with a false knowledge of the true God, setting him to work to seek God the wrong way, and persuading him to be content with such knowledge as is of his own acquiring and not of God's teaching. And this device has proved the more successful because accommodated to the natural and corrupt spirit and temper of man, who, above all things, affects to exalt himself; in which exaltation as God is greatly dishonored, so therein the devil hath his end; who is not anxious how much God is acknowledged in words, provided himself be but always served."—(*Barclay's Apology.*)

The true Christian experiences that "that which is known of God is manifest within." It is the Spirit that quickeneth. It is such as walk after the Spirit that have no condemnation, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets them free from the law of sin and death. It is through the Spirit that the deeds of the body are mortified and life obtained. By acting in accordance with their belief in this important doctrine, Friends were led out of the rites and ceremonies generally observed by other professors of Christianity, and instructed to depend wholly on Christ, and the revelation of his power in the heart, as their guide and support in the way of life everlasting. Thus were the faithful led in preceding generations, and thus only can

any, in this day, be grafted into Christ the true and living Vine, and become fruit-bearing branches. May Friends everywhere hold fast the profession of their faith in this unspeakable gift without wavering, prize the blessed liberty and privileges its practical application has obtained for them, and thus harmoniously travail together for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and "is able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Friends have ever believed they are the appointed outward means of making known the blessed truths of Christianity; that any doctrine not contained in them cannot be rightly required of any one to believe, and that whatever any one says or does contrary to them, must be accounted a delusion. It has been an abiding concern in the Society to impress on its members the great privilege bestowed in the possession of these invaluable records, and it has enjoined, that all should not only make themselves acquainted with them, but also take the needful care to have their children educated in the knowledge and belief of them. But inasmuch as the divine truths they contain were penned under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and relate to the things of God, and things which concern the salvation of the soul, it is necessary, in order that they may make wise unto salvation, that they be interpreted and applied, under the illumination of a measure of the same Spirit which gave them forth. It is thus that they are able to make "*the man of God* perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

While thus duly estimating the Holy Scriptures, Friends have been careful not to give them a place which they do not themselves warrant, nor to ascribe to them an agency which appertains exclusively to Christ and the Holy Spirit. Christ alone is the light and life of

men. He is "the Word of God." He is "the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die." The Scriptures are the *words* of God. They testify of Him who is the way and the truth; and though it pleases Him to make use, at times, of portions of these words as a means to awaken the sinner, or to instruct, to encourage, and to comfort the soul, yet it is Christ alone that can give life, and nourish the soul with the sincere milk of the word; and this He does with them, or without them, as He sees fit.

The more any come under the government of his Spirit, the more they value the Scriptures, and delight to read and meditate on the divine truths they set forth. We would exhort all our members to the daily perusal of a portion of them, and that parents, at proper seasons, read them in their families, with a suitable pause for reflection and retirement to the gift of Grace in the heart. May all feel the obligation, and fervently seek a right qualification to impart to their children such religious instruction as may be adapted to their respective ages and states, enforcing it by the powerful influence of a consistent example. Where this religious concern is daily maintained by parents, suitable opportunities will be presented to imbue the minds of those under their charge with a knowledge of the sacred truths contained in the Scriptures, and also to make them acquainted with, and encourage them to the perusal of works approved by our Religious Society, in which the doctrines and testimonies of the gospel, as held by Friends, are set forth; including the instructive journals or memoirs of many who faithfully adhered to, and exemplified those doctrines and testimonies, often amid much persecution and suffering.

We believe the divine blessing would attend the steady pursuit of such a course, and the children be often brought under an abiding sense of the responsi-

bility resting upon them, and the necessity of seeking for and relying on that "anointing which teacheth all things." Every parent performing his or her duty in this respect, there would be no inducement to send their beloved offspring to schools set up for the formal study and explanation of the Scriptures. Such schools, both for our own members and others, are now popular in many places, and we desire to be tender of the feelings of those who support them; but we believe their tendency is to foster unprofitable activity, and a dependence on critical investigation into those divine truths which can only be discerned spiritually, and thus obstruct, in tenderly visited minds, a solid growth in the Truth, by substituting a literal knowledge of the Scriptures, for an inward growth in grace. Mingling in them with others whose religious views and feelings are very different from those of Friends, can hardly fail to betray into sentiments and practices altogether inconsistent with our religious principles, and such, we believe, has already often been experienced. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." It is necessary, we believe, for every one to experience a measure of the influence of the Holy Spirit, in order to understand and apply the truths of Scripture; and we desire therefore none may attempt to expound or comment on them with their own unassisted reason, or by rehearsing the views of commentators, lest they be led away from an humble reliance on this inward teacher, stray from the truth themselves, and mislead others.

There is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," and Friends believe this one baptism is saving: it being "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resur-

rection of Jesus Christ." The forerunner of Jesus declared, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire." By this baptism of Christ alone can the soul be purified from the defilement of sin, the heart thoroughly purged, the chaff burned, and man be made a member of his mystical body. As the penitent soul is brought under the refining operation of the Holy Spirit, "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," exemplified by the lively figure of the burning of fire, it comes to know what it is to be buried with Christ in baptism, wherein it is also raised with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised Him from the dead. As many as are thus baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into his death, and like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so these also walk in newness of life.

The true believers know the communion of saints in and with Jesus Christ their Lord. This is not the eating of outward bread or drinking of outward wine, but a spiritual participation by the inner man of the flesh and blood of Christ. Jesus declared, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and in reference to this saying, at which his disciples murmured, He added, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." He gave his flesh for "the life of the world," but it was not of the outward flesh and blood of Christ that He spoke, as that of which all must partake to have life, but of Christ the eternal Word, that in the beginning was with God and was God. He is and has been the spiritual food and nourishment of the saints of every

age, "the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die." "The fathers," saith the apostle, "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." The table of the Lord is set for *all*, and *all* are invited to partake thereof. "Behold," saith Christ, "I stand at the door and knock; if *any man* hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me."

Believing it to be a religious duty to meet together for the public worship of Almighty God as an outward testimony of dependence upon Him, and as a means for increasing spiritual strength, Friends have been careful to exhort all their members, to be diligent in the regular attendance of their religious meetings at the times and places appointed. Our religious Society has always regarded the institution of the Sabbath as part of the typical law of Moses, and as such, believes it to be abrogated by the coming of Christ the great Antitype, in whom all the types and shadows of that dispensation were fulfilled, He being the true believer's Sabbath or rest. It is, therefore, a departure from what we believe to be sound words, and calculated to strengthen an error in the professing church, to designate the First day of the week as the Sabbath. But though there is no more sanctity in this day than in any other, yet it is our continued concern to recommend to all our members that, abstaining from bodily labor on that day, they observe and regard it as a day which, by the generality of Christians, is peculiarly set apart for religious retirement and the performance of public worship to Almighty God.

Our Saviour prescribed no form or ceremonial for the performance of worship, the most solemn act in which

man can be engaged; but his emphatic declaration concerning the worship that is acceptable to Him who looketh at the heart, shows that it is wholly a spiritual engagement. "The hour cometh and now is," saith He, "when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him *must* worship him in spirit and in truth." According to this declaration, it is evident that each one must experience in himself the ability begotten to render that worship which God will accept. Hence whatever forms or rites may be practised, whatever discourses delivered or prayers offered, whatever thanks or praises rendered, they constitute in themselves no true or acceptable worship, unless they are the immediate product of the Holy Spirit acting on the hearts of those engaged in their performance.

"The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue are of the Lord." Hence, in order to be prepared to worship the God of the spirits of all flesh, it is necessary to have the attention withdrawn from outward objects, and reverently and humbly to wait, in the silence of all flesh, for his omniscient Spirit to give a true sense of our condition and a knowledge of what will be at the time, well-pleasing in his sight. Thus alone can we be enabled to offer, through our glorified Mediator and High-Priest, acceptable sacrifice and worship; whether it be in silent adoration, in secret supplication, in vocal prayer or in thanksgiving. Our gracious Lord has promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name there He is in the midst of them. Where He thus condescends to grant his divine presence, He will not fail to manifest it to the true worshippers, administering the food convenient for their souls.

The idea appears to prevail among a large portion of professing Christians, that to constitute divine worship

there must be a prescribed system of ordinances, the performance of which is generally dependent on the presence of one man; and at the present time a disposition prevails to multiply these forms and to place increased reliance upon them and on those employed to carry them out. Everything in the way of worship which man does in his own will or in his own strength, which he can both begin and end at his pleasure, do or leave undone as he sees fit, without the immediate prompting and assistance of the Holy Spirit, is nothing more than will-worship, and is not that worship in spirit and in truth which the Father will accept.

But as it is not in the performance of rites or ceremonies that living worship consists, so neither is it in the mere assembling together, nor in sitting in outward silence. We would, therefore, press on all the members of our religious Society not to neglect the assembling of themselves together, and the importance when thus met, of retiring to the divine gift in the soul, and striving to hold their meetings as George Fox was concerned the meetings of Friends should be held in his day. "Friends," said he, "hold all your meetings in the name of Christ, that you may feel Him in the midst of you, exercising his offices. As He is a prophet whom God has raised up to open to you; as he is a Shepherd who hath laid down his life for you, to feed you, so hear his voice; and as he is a Counsellor and Commander, follow him and his counsel; and as He is a Bishop to oversee you with his heavenly power and Spirit; and as He is a Priest who offered himself for you, who is made higher than the heavens, who sanctifies his people, his church, and presents them to God without blemish, spot or wrinkle, so know Him in all his offices exercising them amongst you and in you." Were these Christian privileges more generally realized among us, we are persuaded there would be no disposition to undervalue

our meetings though often held throughout in silence, nor a desire to introduce into them preaching or teaching of doctrine, however scriptural, unless immediately called forth by the Head of the Church; nor yet the offering of formal prayers, or reading in the Holy Scriptures,—all of which are calculated to defeat the very object for which Friends profess to come together.

The exercise of a rightly authorized ministry in the Church is a great blessing to it. From the rise of our religious Society it has claimed the liberty for all the true disciples of Christ to occupy the gifts bestowed on them by Him for the edification of the body; and Friends have ever believed it to be the prerogative of the Head of the Church alone, to select and call the ministers of His gospel, and that the gift and the qualification to exercise it are derived immediately from Him. We find by the Holy Scriptures that in the earliest ages of the Christian Church both men and women were moved by the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel of life and salvation. This was and is the fulfilment of the prophecy. “It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy:” “and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.” We apprehend it was one of the greatest corruptions in doctrine and practice that crept in with the apostasy, to deprive women altogether of a part in the ministry, and to appoint one man, trained in schools of divinity, as they are called, and ordained by his fellow-man, to preach to an assembly; performing the service at stated times, whether divinely called and qualified for it or not, to the exclusion of all other members of the congregation, whatever be their religious experience, and however clear their apprehended duty at any time to speak

to the people. The Apostle in giving directions to the Church in Corinth, says, "Let the prophets [ministers] speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted."

As a gift in the ministry can be dispensed by Christ alone, no man has a right to take the sacred calling on himself unless chosen of God; and no system of study, no learning nor mode of ordination, can confer the qualifications for performing its solemn and responsible functions. But our glorified Bishop and High-Priest, in his love and care for his Church, condescends to confer gifts for the ministry of the gospel on such—both men and women—as He sees fit to select, first preparing them by the baptisms of the Holy Ghost to receive them. As these are thus called and commissioned, and the gift exercised under the immediate requiring of their holy Leader, their preaching is "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." They feel that they are bound freely to dispense that which they also freely receive, and to accept no other reward than that given by their Master for obeying his commands.

Very fervent is our desire that while professing to the world these gospel truths respecting the ministry, Friends may be careful to give them due place and practice among themselves, that so the Society may be preserved from the withering effects of formal, wordy exhortations, or lifeless doctrinal discourses, which can do no more than amuse the ear without affecting the heart. The Apostles were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high; and one of them enjoins, "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth," so that in order that

preaching may be instrumental in bringing souls to Christ, or building up the hearers in saving faith, it must spring from the immediate putting forth of the Holy Spirit, directing when and what to say. William Penn, speaking of the ministers among Friends in his day, says, "They were changed men themselves before they went about to change others. Their hearts were rent as well as their garments, and they knew the power and work of God upon them. * * They went not forth or preached in their own time or will, but in the will of God, and spoke not their own studied matter, but as they were opened and moved by his Spirit, with which they were well acquainted in their own conversion." Dear Friends, as it was in that day, so now, it is those ministers and those only thus prepared and moved, that can reach the witness for God in the hearts of their auditors, availingly direct to Christ, and comfort and edify the Church. And we are persuaded that all missions undertaken or prosecuted by persons not thus changed and prepared, or without a special call thereto and the guidance of the Head of the Church therein — of which the Church should always be the judge — will prove hurtful to those engaged in them, and powerless in spreading the spiritual kingdom of the Redeemer.

As with preaching, so likewise with teaching, and all other spiritual gifts bestowed for the edification of the Church. They can only be imparted by Christ, and are to be exercised under the renewed anointing of the Holy Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit: and there are differences of administration, but the same Lord." "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

We are all fallen and fallible beings, and without

Christ, can do no good thing. We cannot maintain the needful watch over the promptings of the carnal mind, and the insidious temptations of our unwearied enemy, without the aid of the Holy Spirit; and our Saviour has instructed us that we must ask this from the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Hence prayer is inseparable from the life and growth of the Christian. But the Apostle declares, "We know not what we should pray for, as we ought," but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. It is therefore only through the aid of the Spirit of our holy Intercessor and Advocate with the Father, that we can become truly sensible of our needs, and rightly qualified to put up availing prayer. Thus, even in the commencement of the work of salvation, when through the convictions of the Holy Spirit, a sense of the sinfulness and lost condition of the soul is produced, a cry for mercy and forgiveness is raised, under the prompting of the same blessed Spirit, which reaches the ear of Him who alone can answer it, and finds acceptance. And so it is through every stage of Christian progress: the spirit of supplication must first be extended to the soul, before we can acceptably approach, and availing intercede at the footstool of the great I AM.

Friends have always had a testimony against set forms of prayer, or the use of words whereby petitions are expressed, without the heart being moved thereto by Divine grace, under a real sense of its wants; and this whether in public or in private; believing that formal prayer, or that which goes forth from unprepared lips, is offensive in the Divine sight. Vocal prayer, whether in meetings for Divine worship, or in any other assembly, offered under the immediate qualification vouchsafed by the Shepherd of Israel, will carry the evidence of its origin with it, and the spiritual worshippers can unite in it. Jesus told his disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in

the Son." This asking in the name of Christ, is not the mere use of that name, as "we ask for Christ's sake," or "we plead in the name of Christ," but as Isaac Penington has well said, "The name wherein the asking and acceptance is, is living, and he that prayeth in the motion of the Spirit, and in the power and virtue of the Son's life, he prayeth in the name, and his voice is owned of the Father." Our Lord commands his disciples, "Take ye heed, watch and pray," and the Apostles exhorted the believers in his day, "be sober and watch unto prayer." If we are careful to maintain this holy watch, the soul, humbled under a sense of its wants and impotence, will constantly feel its dependence on the Preserver of men, and, though it may be in inaudible aspirations, will yet "pray without ceasing."

It is important that these views of the qualification for acceptable prayer should be early inculcated by parents in their children, so that they may not be drawn into the utterance of a form of words, as a substitute for those aspirations prompted by Divine grace, under a sense of their wants.

We are concerned in the present occasion, to revive the testimony which Friends have ever borne against formal singing, as constituting any part of Divine worship.

As we cannot consistently adopt a form of words, prepared beforehand, to be read, or committed to memory and rehearsed, as an act of adoration, so, we believe, they are not less unauthorized, and cannot be rendered less objectionable, by singing them, or by accompanying them with music, as though the Divine Being could be pleased by the melody of the voice, or of musical instruments. This is not that singing of which the Apostle speaks as being "with the Spirit and with the understanding also," or as "singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord."

The influence of sweet sounds on the senses is very captivating; and hence, where vocal or instrumental music is introduced as a part of worship, whether in public meetings or social gatherings, they may so act on the feelings, as to deceive into a belief that that solemn act has been performed, when the preparation of the heart, which alone can qualify for it, has been unfelt and perhaps unthought of. The words employed are often expressive of states or feelings which those uttering them have not at the time, and perhaps may never have experienced; and thus, while professing to offer worship to Him who searcheth the heart, they are saying that which, as respects themselves, is not true.

We would extend a caution to all our dear Friends against this dangerous snare, and encourage them to renewed faithfulness in maintaining the testimony of Truth against it.

In reviving the long-established and distinguishing views of Friends on these important subjects, we are deeply impressed with the conviction that the welfare of our religious Society and the growth of its members in the unchangeable Truth, are intimately connected with their practical maintenance. It is only as the Society is careful to uphold the gospel standard in the things of God, and things appertaining to his worship and service, that its members will be likely to perceive correctly their individual places in the Church, and those on whom it rightly devolves to lead and feed the Lord's flock, and gather souls to Christ, be properly prepared therefor.

There are great corruptions in doctrine and practice respecting these things in the professing church at this day, and many are engaging themselves, and urging others to engage in the solemn services of public ministry and prayer, who give little or no evidence that they

have been prepared for and called thereto by the Head of the Church. May Friends everywhere, through the aid of that Spirit which is sufficient for them, and in that strength which is made perfect in weakness, live up to the scriptural standard of the simplicity, spirituality and purity of the gospel dispensation, that so that which stands opposed thereto may be rebuked, and they, as lights in the world, bring glory to Him who is Head over all things in the Church.

The experience of nearly two centuries has, we believe, confirmed the declaration made in the beginning of the Society, that its discipline was instituted, and its meetings for discipline "set up in the wisdom of God." Both are designed for the promotion of piety and charity, and for the exercise of a tender care over the members "that all may be preserved in unity of faith and practice, answerable to the description which He, the blessed Shepherd, gave of his flock, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one for another." Hence this Yearly Meeting, referring to meetings for discipline, was engaged, long since, to issue the advice to its members that "The love, power and peaceable Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ being the alone authority of all our meetings, it is the fervent concern of this meeting, that they may be held under a sense and influence of that holy unction." And in reference to the preparation needful to qualify for conducting the important concerns of the Church, it declared "We are concerned that the management of our Christian discipline be not committed to hands unclean; particularly of such who allow or connive at undue liberties in their children or families. 'If a man (said the Apostle) know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?'" "It is no man's learning nor artificial acquirements; it is no

man's riches nor greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence or natural wisdom that makes him fit for government in the Church of Christ: all his endowments must be seasoned with the heavenly salt, his spirit be subjected, and his gifts pass through the fire of God's altar, a sacrifice to his praise and honor; that so, self being baptized into death, the gifts may be used in the power of the resurrection of the life of Jesus in him."

The preservation from decay in spiritual life of the individual members, and the promotion of the blessed cause of Truth by the Society, greatly depend on the proper observance of the rules and regulations established in divine wisdom, and which should be maintained in the meek and loving Spirit of Christ. We are affectionately solicitous that Friends everywhere, may be impressed with the importance of earnestly endeavoring to come up in practice to what they profess, in relation to the authority of meetings for discipline and the needful preparation for taking part in them; so that such meetings may be held under a sense of the solemnizing presence of the Head of the Church, and those only be introduced into service in them, who have experienced that preparation of heart which leads to a reliance on divine direction, and redeems from an undue confidence in the natural understanding. Thus the Society would become a compact and harmonious body, the members exercising the several gifts, differing according to the measure of grace received, but all laboring together to remove that which is wrong, and to maintain inviolate the doctrines and testimonies of the gospel, which we as a people are called to uphold before the world.

It is an apostolic injunction, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." No man can comply with this, but as he knows his natural propensities restrained by divine grace vouchsafed to him. As

this is allowed to operate on the heart, unlawful desires are curbed, and the affections set upon things which are in heaven. It was thus that Friends in the beginning were constrained to renounce that which the world highly esteems, and to maintain a consistent testimony against the manners and maxims which conformed to its spirit. Being restrained from complying with the varying fashions of the day, and from adopting the corrupt language that had obtained among those who were willing to flatter the pride of the human heart, or were not scrupulous respecting the true import of the words they used, they became a marked people, differing in dress and address from those around them, also in their plain way of living, and their open, fair mode of conducting their business. We know that a mere profession or outside appearance, can do nothing towards effecting a change of heart, but as the Spirit of Truth thus led our ancients to lay aside everything unbecoming the followers of Christ, so we believe it continues to lead into the same path those who submit to its guidance; and that it is as obligatory upon the members now as ever it was, to support the testimony to plainness of speech, behaviour and apparel, as it has always been understood by consistent Friends.

Some who are themselves consistent in these particulars, indulge in greater show and expense in the furniture of their houses and their style of living, than become the humble followers of Christ. We would invite these dear Friends seriously to consider the effects which such a course of life is likely to have on their best interest, and on that of their beloved offspring. We cannot doubt that if our fellow-members everywhere, would attend closely to the dictates of the unflattering witness in their hearts, it will keep them from being conformed to this world, and lead them, both by precept and example, to withstand these growing evils. And

you, dear Friends, who plead for greater liberty in regard to these testimonies, calling that which they refer to "little things," we would affectionately entreat you to examine, in the light of Christ, why it is you seek to be conformed to the world in these things, and to comply with its vain fashions and customs. A close search into the secret motives to such compliances, we apprehend, will discover that they arise from that love of the world which is incompatible with the love of the Father, and from a desire to escape the mortification which attends the cross, and being esteemed over-strict and narrow-minded. As departures in these things are indulged, and the modes and manners of the world followed, weakness in the practice of other religious duties will ensue, and temptations to disregard other testimonies will prevail. Thus Friends and their children are often introduced into company not congenial with a growth in religious life, and a door is opened for attachments being formed between young companions not in membership with Friends, which, if they result in marriage, may prove of lasting injury both to them and their offspring. The evils resulting from mixed marriages, we believe to be so serious both to our religious Society and to the parties contracting them, that we would earnestly entreat Friends everywhere, to give them that consideration their importance demands, and to seek for ability to maintain the testimony which our religious Society has ever had against them.

While we rejoice in the belief that there is a progressive improvement in the professing church, and that under the powerful though secret operation of the gift of Divine grace in the hearts of the people, the kingdom of the Redeemer is extending in the earth, we are nevertheless sensible that it is a day of peculiar temptation to the members of our religious Society, to draw back from

the high profession it has ever made, and to compromise in some respects, the simple spiritual truths of the gospel as heretofore believed and advocated by it. There is much said about doing away denominational distinctions, and many plans are essayed for bringing the members of different religious societies into joint action, ostensibly for the purpose of promoting the cause of religion. Every true disciple of Christ must long for the salvation of his fellow-men, and that all those who name the name of his divine Master, should depart from iniquity and know what it is to be made one in Him. This can be brought about, only as they individually experience the one saving baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, and are thus grafted into Christ, the living Vine. But, dear Friends, however we may desire to be in any wise instrumental in promoting this great work, it behooves us all to watch unto prayer, lest we enter into the temptation to lower, or to shrink from upholding the exalted standard of Christian faith which our adorable Head has mercifully intrusted to us as a people, and designed we should commend to others by precept and example. Every truly convinced Friend will feel concerned that the pure principles of the gospel; as held by our religious Society, may be acknowledged and lived up to by all other professors; but the Light of Christ in his heart, which has brought him to understand and embrace those principles, will restrain him from uniting in anything or with any others, whatever may be the professed object in view, whereby these principles, or the testimonies growing out of them, will be compromised or obscured. Nay, we apprehend that unless under a clear sense of religious duty, he will feel that he may not himself, nor can he encourage his fellow-members, to enter into association with others, for religious purposes, where the temptation is strong to comply with forms of worship or modes of action, consonant with the views of

those associates, but inconsistent with a faithful support of our doctrines and practices. We extend this caution in love to all our dear Friends, and more especially to the younger members, for whose preservation and establishment in the unchangeable Truth we are tenderly concerned.

Dear young Friends of whatever sex or station, we would extend an earnest, loving invitation to you, to ponder the paths of your feet and turn from the "Lo heres" and "Lo theres," into inward retirement and stillness before the Lord; waiting reverently upon Him that his Spirit may move on your hearts, separating light from darkness, and giving you to see things as they really are, and purging your consciences from dead works to serve the living God. Accept the word of exhortation, we beseech you, to give diligent attention to the voice of your compassionate Saviour, speaking in the secret of your hearts. Obedience to it is the only way by which you can be made conformable to his will, which is your sanctification. If you closely and reverently regard it, it will not only preserve you from the follies and vices of the world, and supply you with that wisdom which is profitable to direct under every circumstance of this changeful life, but it will draw down on you the inexpressible blessings, promised to those who devote themselves early to serve the Lord, and it will establish you on the immutable rock Christ Jesus, the foundation of many generations.

While there are many things in our midst to clothe the heart with sadness, we are cheered in the belief that there are not a few among you on whom the Lord has laid his forming hand, and whom it is his gracious purpose, if you are obedient to Him, to make servants in his household. Having felt in measure the drawing power of the Father's love, and heard the pleadings of

his still small voice, "See—we entreat you—that ye turn not away from Him that speaketh from heaven." Remember that the reproofs of his Spirit are the way to life, and that it is his goodness that leadeth to repentance. It is no cause for discouragement or dismay that your former rest is broken up, or that the sense of past transgressions weighs heavily upon you. Help is laid on One who is able to save to the very uttermost; who died for you; who has made atonement for your sins, and who will, if ye are wholly given up to obey Him, wash them all away in his own precious blood. The way to the crown immortal is straight and narrow to flesh and blood, but there is no other way by which it can be obtained. None who enter and keep in this highway of holiness have cause to be afraid or ashamed of it. As you take step after step therein, it will shine more and more unto the perfect day. Christ's holy yoke, as it is daily borne, will restrain all hurtful or inordinate desires, in their very beginning. The living faith which He will give will overcome the world, by enabling you to rise victorious over every temptation, whether from within or from without, and finally make you more than conquerors through Him that loved you.

Within comparatively few years many dedicated servants and handmaidens, who stood as watchmen and watchwomen on the walls, have been removed, and the places that have known them will know them no more. The Church deeply feels their loss, and the need of others, rightly qualified, to fill her broken ranks. They were concerned to evince their love for Christ by serving him in uprightness and fear. Being redeemed from the the spirit of the world, and having their affections set on things above, they were preserved from the love or undue pursuit of its riches, or desire for its friendships or honors, and they bore unflinchingly a consistent testimony against its corrupt customs and fashions, nobly

adhering to gospel simplicity in their style of living, in their apparel, their speech, and their deportment. Having been taught by the Light of Christ the deceitfulness of the human heart, and its proneness to be conformed to the maxims and manners of the world, they passed the time of their sojourning here in fear, endeavoring to reach the witness for God in the breasts of those around them, by the loud preaching of a life consistent with the high profession they made; and the Lord made them quick of understanding in his fear, and bestowed on them his gifts for the edification of the church. Their memory is precious, and we thus revert to them, under a warm and tender solicitude that, from among the younger members, there may be raised up a band of living successors, who, walking by the same rule and minding the same thing as they did, will know an advancement in humility, in watchfulness, and in entire dependence on their holy Leader. Thus will they adorn our holy profession, and as standard-bearers, faithfully uphold the various testimonies of the gospel which Friends have ever believed to be required of them, and which are as important and as binding on us of the present generation, as they were on those who have gone before us.

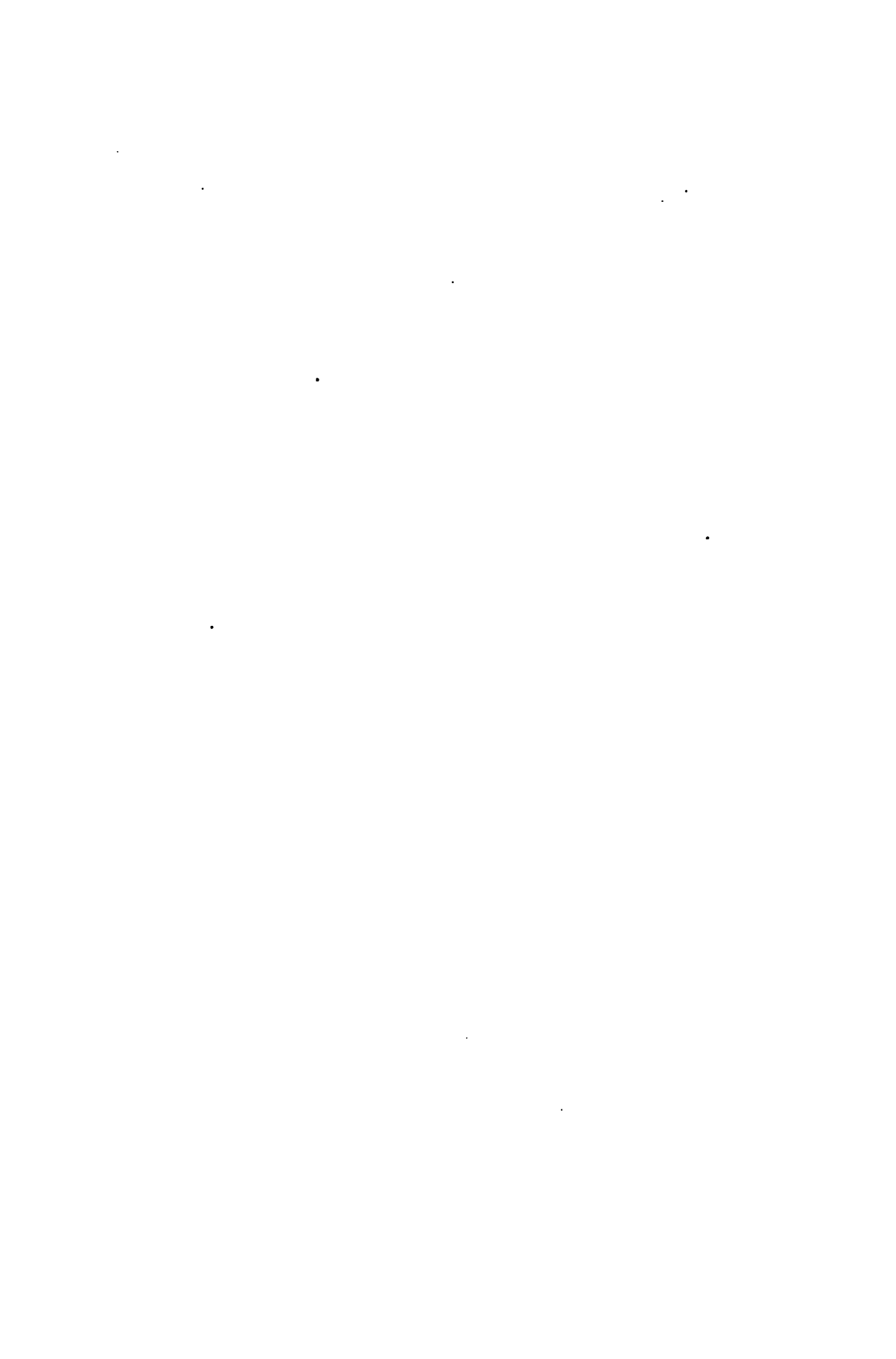
Having thus, in a fresh extension of gospel love to our brethren and sisters, and, though in weakness, as we believe, under a sense of religious duty, endeavored to bring into view different subjects which nearly affect the welfare of the body, and the spiritual health of its members, we would affectionately commend them to the serious consideration of all. We firmly believe that the Lord raised up the Society of Friends, to be faithful witnesses against the corruptions that have found their way into the visible Church, and we cannot escape the sad fruits of disobedience, if we fall short of the fidelity and

integrity required of us. But inasmuch as to maintain a controversy with error, will not, of itself, give an establishment in the Truth, and as we may cease to be conformed to the world in many things, without being transformed by the renewing of our minds, let none rest satisfied with anything short of a full surrender of the heart to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and thus experience a new birth unto righteousness. As this prevails, the spirit of effectual, fervent prayer will be poured out more abundantly upon us, and our long-suffering, compassionate Father in heaven, will be entreated to purge away, not only the dross and the tin, but the reprobate silver also; and in the renewed extendings of his life-giving presence amongst us, the language of the evangelical prophet would be applicable to us as a people, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee."

Signed on behalf and by direction of the
YEARLY MEETING.

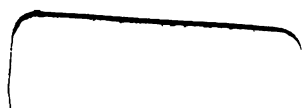
JOSEPH SCATTERGOOD,

Clerk this Year.









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